UNSPEAKABLE REBEL SUPERWEAPON: EMPEROR'S EYES ONLY

STAR WARS™

DOCTOR APHRA

MARVEL 035

SPURRIER • BROCCARDO
DEERING • HANNA • O'HALLORAN

UNSPEAKABLE REBEL SUPERWEAPON

Part IV

Rogue archaeologist Doctor Aphra has developed quite a name for herself, not only as a brilliant scientist but also as a thief and an obtainer of valuable and dangerous ancient artifacts.

After refusing to help the Rebellion create their own Death Star using Aphra's latest score--a Jedi weapon called the FARKILLER--Aphra returned home with her ward, Vulaada, only to discover that a bounty had been put on them by Minister Pitina Voor, their latest employer.

Hoping to make a deal for protection with the Empire, Aphra planned to steal the Farkiller with the help of Wookiee bounty hunter Black Krrsantan. But her ex and latest rebel recruit, Magna Tolvan, has discovered Aphra's plan....

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Rebel Fleet: Indigo Squadron.

"DID YOU *SERIOUSLY* THINK I WOULDN'T WATCH YOU?"

YOU ARE PREDICTABLE IN YOUR *AWFULNESS*, APHRA. ON A LONG ENOUGH TIMELINE, TREACHERY WILL ONLY EVER CONSUME ITSE--

UH, SIR?

I HATE TO INTERRUPT A GOOD CATHARTIC MONOLOGUE-- BUT...

...YOU'RE GONNA WANT TO GRAB A *MASK*.

WHAT?

WWBBB

WHO THE HELL WOULD BE STUPID ENOUGH TO--

NRRRRRAAAAAOOOUUGHH!
CAPAIN TOLVAN, MEET BLACK KRRSANTAN.
SANTY, MEET CAPTAIN SNUGGLES.

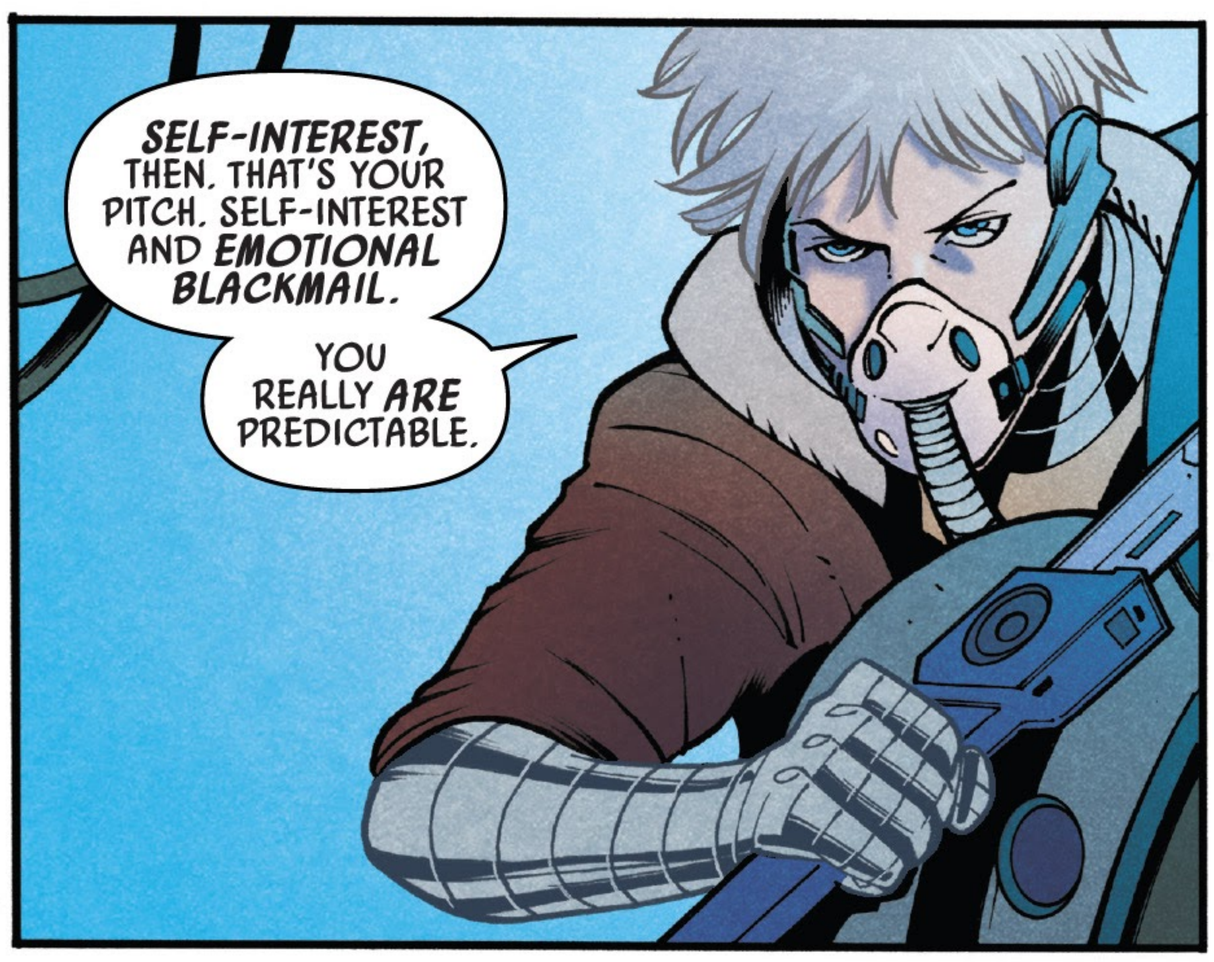
ALL RIGHT, JUST--*STOP* A SECOND! GUYS! *TOLVAN!* JUST *LISTEN!*

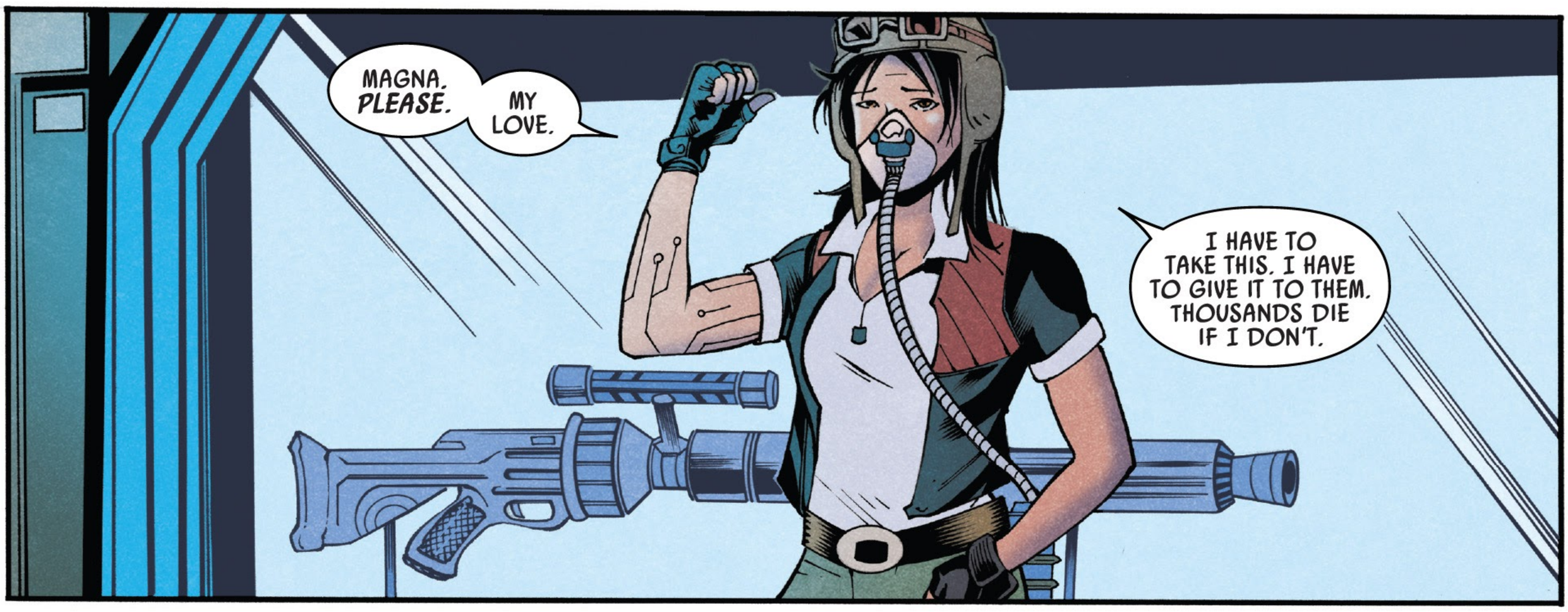
SHRANG

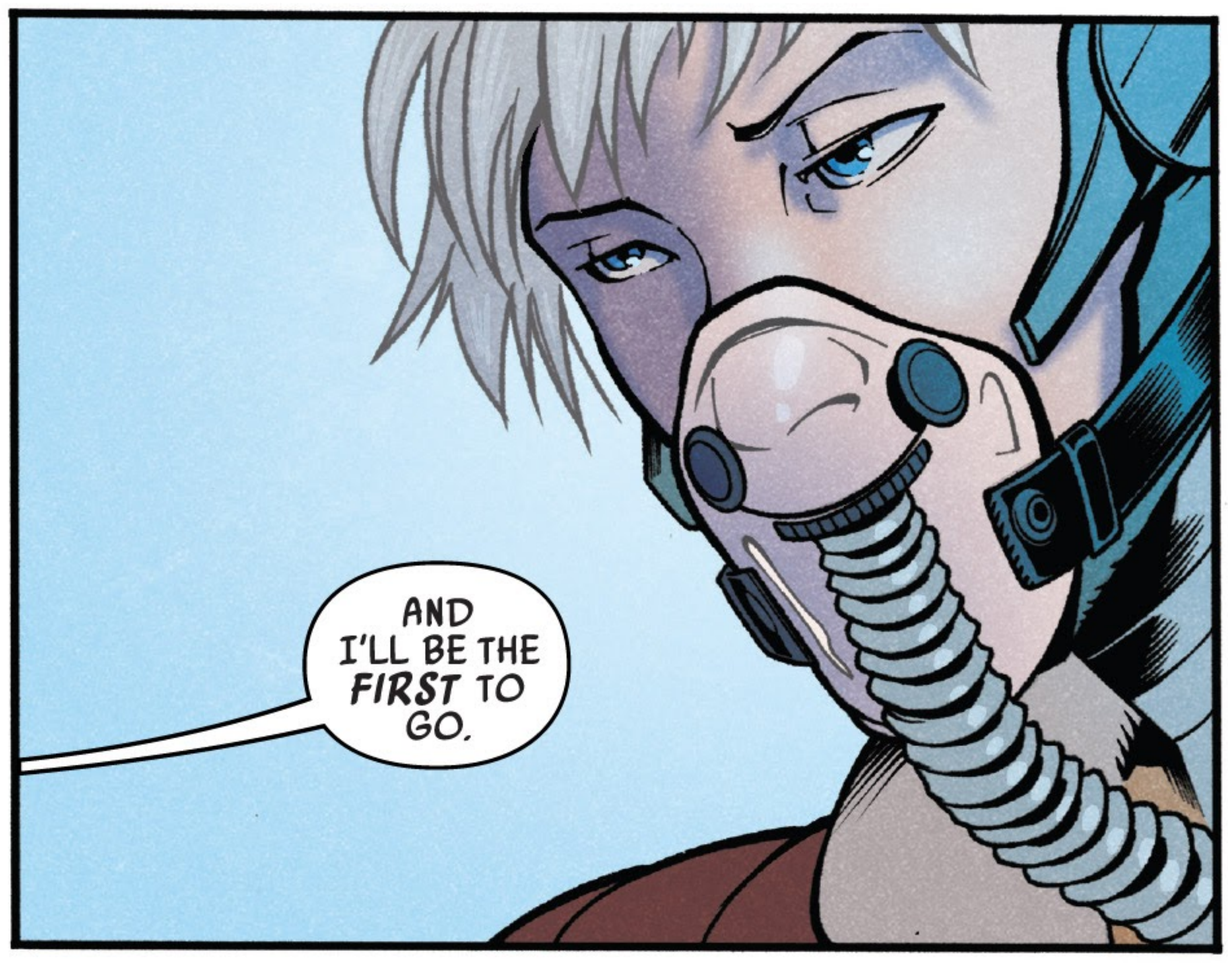
YOU KNOW WHAT THESE REBEL DUMMIES'RE *DOING* OUT HERE, RIGHT? WHAT THEY'RE USING THIS RELIC *FOR?*

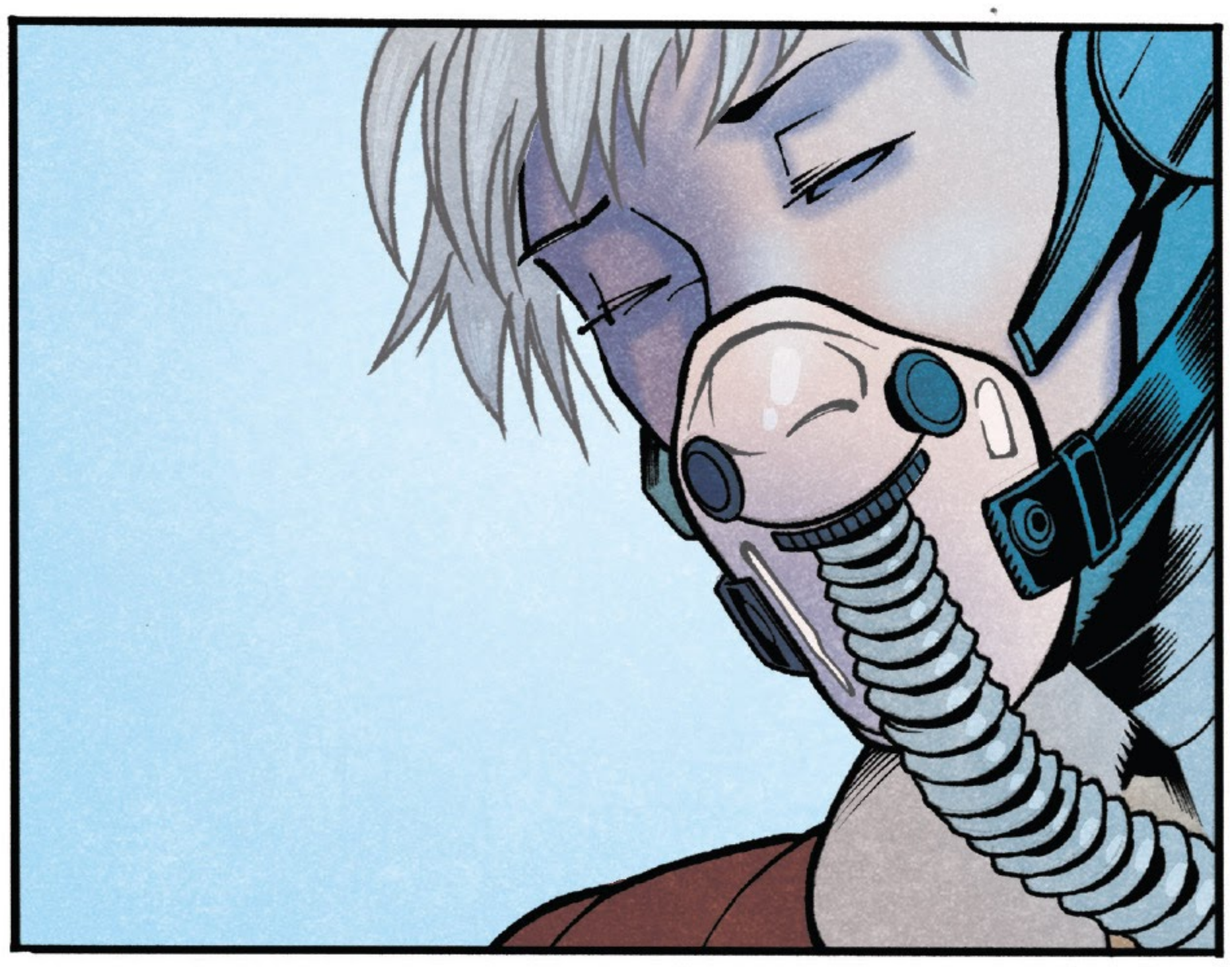
...THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE PROTECTING. THEY'RE GOING TO USE THE FARKILLER TO BUILD THIS. SHOOT THE PALACE ON CORUSCANT--TAKE OUT PALPATINE.
ALONG WITH A FEW THOUSAND BYSTANDERS.
A PRAGMATIC APPROACH. WARS ARE NOT WON BY RESTRAINT. AND LET'S NOT PRETEND YOU GIVE A DAMN ABOUT INNOCENT LIVES.
THEN WHY D'YOU LOOK SO PISSED?
AH. YOU DIDN'T KNOW ANY OF THIS--DID YOU? THEY DIDN'T TRUST YOU WITH THE BIG PICTURE...
HMPH. ALSO A PRAGMATIC CHOICE--GIVEN MY HISTORY. IT CHANGES NOTHING.
MY PRIDE IS WORTH LESS THAN MY DUTY.
TT. YOU ARE SUCH A CAREERIST.
I FORGOT HOW HOT THAT IS.
HRRRRR.

LOOK...THE EMPIRE'S GUNNING FOR ME. YOU KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE, IT WON'T STOP. NOTHING CAN PROTECT ME.
MAKING A DEAL, GIVING THEM SOMETHING--THAT'S MY ONLY CHANCE.


SELF-INTEREST, THEN. THAT'S YOUR PITCH. SELF-INTEREST AND EMOTIONAL BLACKMAIL.
YOU REALLY ARE PREDICTABLE.


MAGNA, PLEASE.
MY LOVE.
I HAVE TO TAKE THIS. I HAVE TO GIVE IT TO THEM. THOUSANDS DIE IF I DON'T.


AND I'LL BE THE FIRST TO GO.

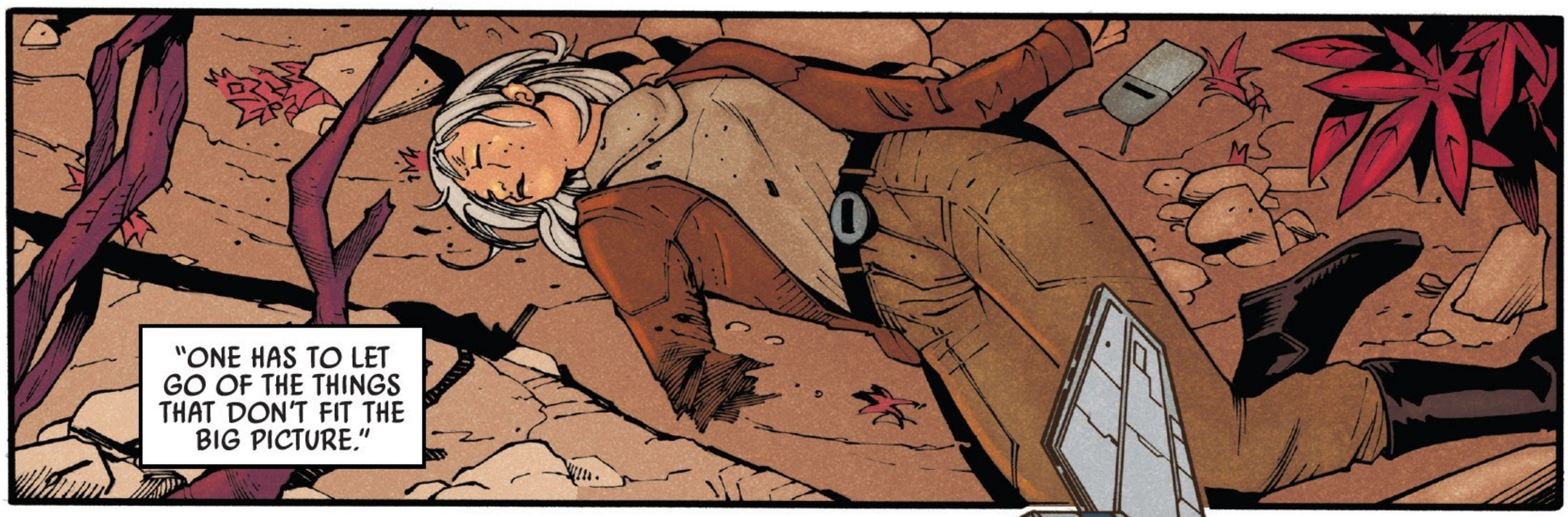


AN INJURY. YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE IT LOOK GOOD.
Y-YOU MEAN--?

MY STRIKE TEAM WILL BE ON ITS WAY. YOU'D BEST HURRY.
VULAADA! G-GET TO THE SHIP! NO TIME FOR DRIFTING-- WE'RE COMING OUT QUICK AND COLD!

BUT--I'M SUPPOSED TO WAIT 'TIL THEY CONFINE US IN THE ARK ANGEL! GURTYL'S STILL DOING THE DIVERSION!
LEAVE HER!
WHAT? I CAN'T LEA--
JUST DO IT. DO IT OR WE ALL DIE. YOU GOTTA LET GO OF THE THINGS THAT DON'T FIT THE BIG PICTURE, VU.
THAT'S HOW PROGRESS HAPPENS.
HERE. IMPERIAL COMMAND IDENT. YOU WON'T GET LONG TO MAKE YOUR DEAL.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
YOU NEVER DO.
I LOVE YOU, DOCTOR APHRA.
I KNOW.
I HATE YOU, DOCTOR APHRA.

THOKK
I KNOW.
"HEY, QUIT CRYING, KID.
"YOU KNOW, YOU SHOULD BE THANKING US..."



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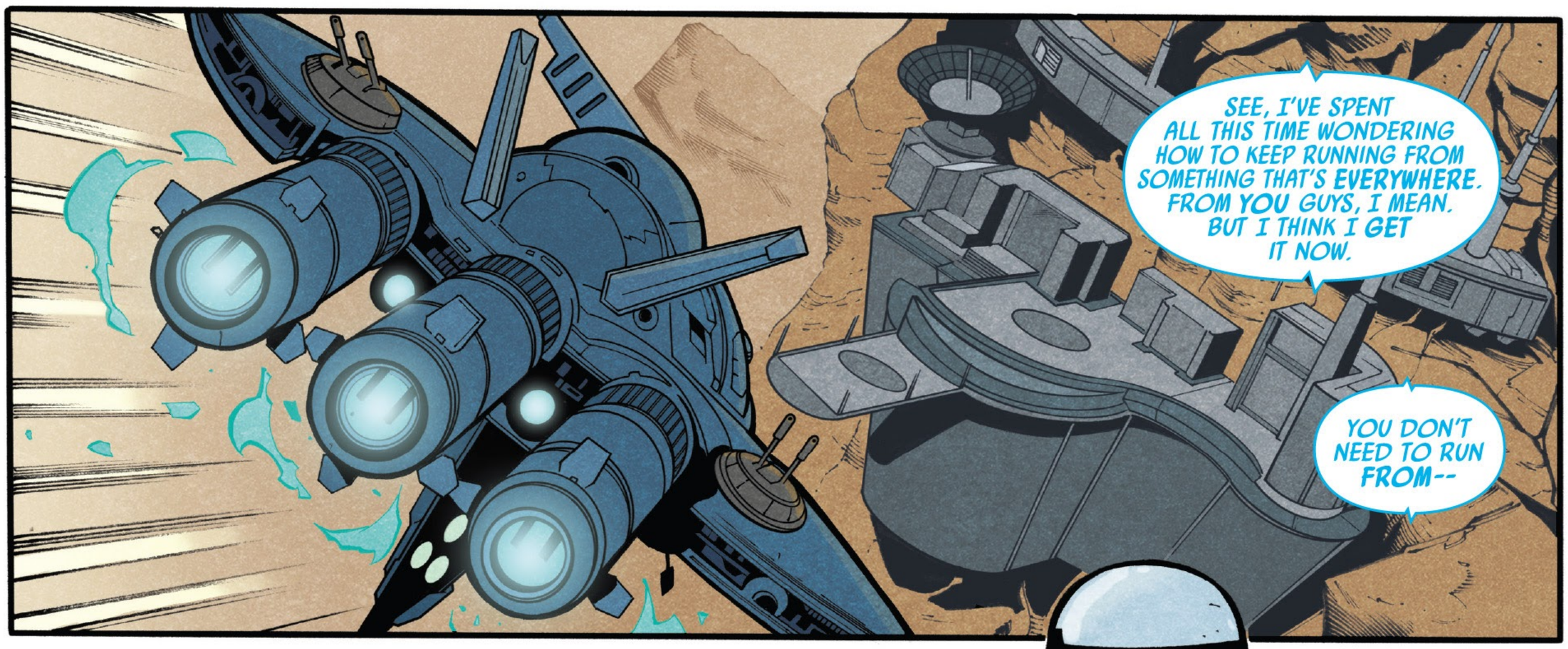
Imperial Communication Relay. Usk Minor. Now.
SIR? I HAVE A DATA PACKET INCOMING.
IT'S MARKED FOR COMMAND RANK AND ABOVE. THE CODES ARE A LITTLE OLD...
PUTTING IT ON HOLO NOW...
--CTOR APHRA. I REPEAT: MY NAME IS DOCTOR CHELLI LONA APHRA. I HEAR I'M EXTREMELY WANTED.
I HAVE SOMETHING YOU GUYS ARE GONNA WANT TO SEE.
SIR, THIS IS...IT'S STRANGE. THE BROADCAST SIGNAL SEEMS TO BE PROLIFERATING.
WHAT? HOW?
"THERE'S...SOMETHING IN THE DATA. IT'S HIJACKING OUR RELAYS--TRANSMITTING ON EVERY COMMAND CHANNEL THERE IS! IT'S LIKE A DISEASE..."
♫
SO-- I'M GIVING MYSELF UP.

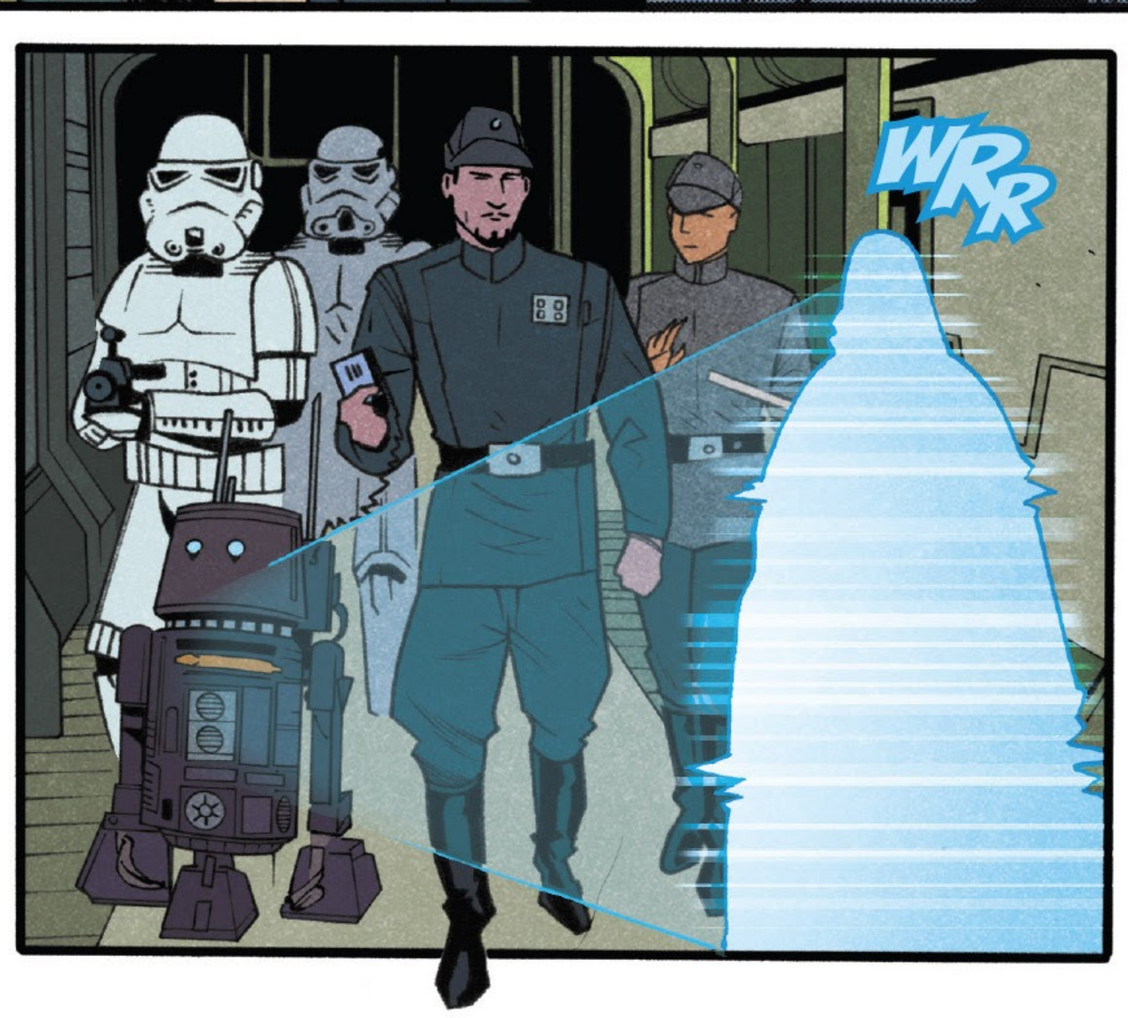
THE REBELS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING A SUPERWEAPON, CAPABLE OF ASSASSINATING THE EMPEROR FROM BEYOND THE CORE SYSTEMS.
I HAVE PLANS TO SUPPORT THIS CLAIM AND A JEDI RELIC THAT IS A VITAL COMPONENT IN THE PROTOTYPE.
RESTRICT THE SIGNAL! THIS COULD BE SENSITIVE INFORMATION!
I--I CAN'T, SIR.
I'M WILLING TO PRESENT THESE THINGS TO THE EMPIRE AS A SHOW OF GOOD FAITH. I AM NOT YOUR ENEMY.
WH-WHO'S HEARING THIS?
UM. EV-EV--
"--EVERYONE."
IT'LL BE UP TO YOU--THE LEADERS OF THE EMPIRE--TO DECIDE HOW YOU RESPOND TO THIS GIFT. HOW DOES THE REGIME TREAT THOSE WHO SUPPORT ITS CAUSE?
DO YOU GREET THEM...THANK THEM... WELCOME THEM TO THE FOLD?
OR DO YOU BETRAY THEM?


SEE, I'VE SPENT ALL THIS TIME WONDERING HOW TO KEEP RUNNING FROM SOMETHING THAT'S EVERYWHERE. FROM YOU GUYS, I MEAN. BUT I THINK I GET IT NOW.
YOU DON'T NEED TO RUN FROM--

--IF YOU CHOOSE TO RUN TO.
HALT!

LIKE WE PRACTICED.
JUST KEEP SMILING... JUST KEEP SMILING...

SIR, WE'RE RECEIVING COMMANDS--B-BUT IT'S AN ENCRYPTED LINE. NO IDENTITY GIVEN.
RIDICULOUS. TELL WHOEVER-IT-IS WE CAN'T OBEY ANY ORDERS UNLESS THEY ACTIVATE THEIR HOLO AND STATE THEIR RANK.


WRR

STAN'S SOAPBOX · FEBRUARY 1969

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Okay, students! The subject of today's swingin' seminar will be "Where Do You Nuts Get Your Ideas?" That question is asked of Yours Truly at lectures, interviews, and bull sessions more often than any other. So, let's kick it around for Marveldom Assembled. The point is, ideas are no problem. Here in the Bullpen, we can't talk to each other for five minutes without coming up with a zillion new thoughts and angles. The big hangup is getting the time to develop the ideas . . . to polish them, and refine them until we feel they'll have maximum impact — until we know they'll be an integral part of the ubiquitous Marvel universe! Everyone has ideas — you, I, the gang in the mailroom — even our competitors, bless 'em. What really counts is what you DO with them. We believe that almost any idea can be worthwhile, if it's presented with integrity, taste, and imagination. For, an idea is like a guitar — it doesn't mean a thing unless you know how to use it! Excelsior.

Smiley

artwork of Happy HOWARD PURCELL can be? Since he's taken over the Watcher yarn which rounds out our spellbinding SILVER SURFER mag, we wonder how we ever got along without him! Howie still teaches art in his spare time, so poor Smiley has to think twice before trying to make like an editor! And, by the way, no matter how you slice it, THE SILVER SURFER is probably the biggest smash hit in comic mag publishing since the still-supreme F.F. — just as you knew it would be!

STAN LEE
FOREVER

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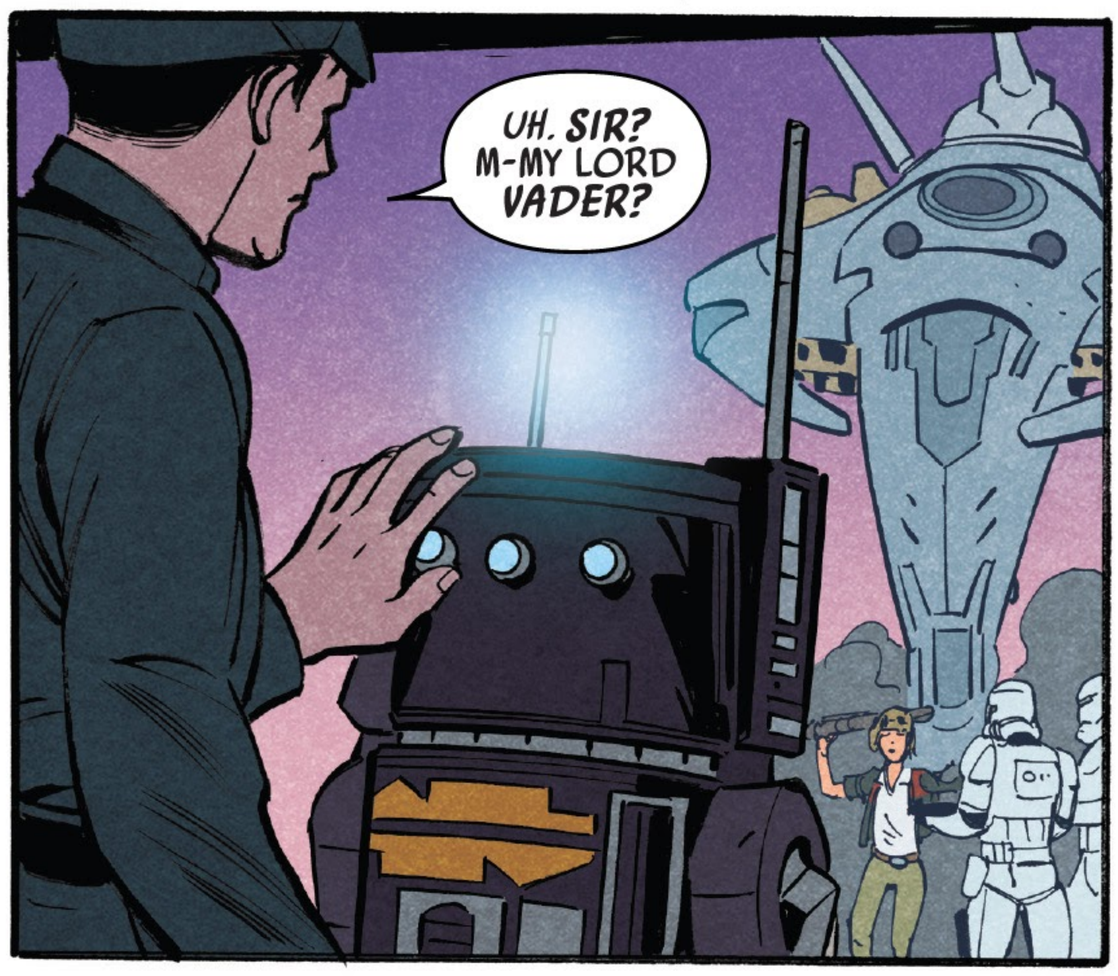
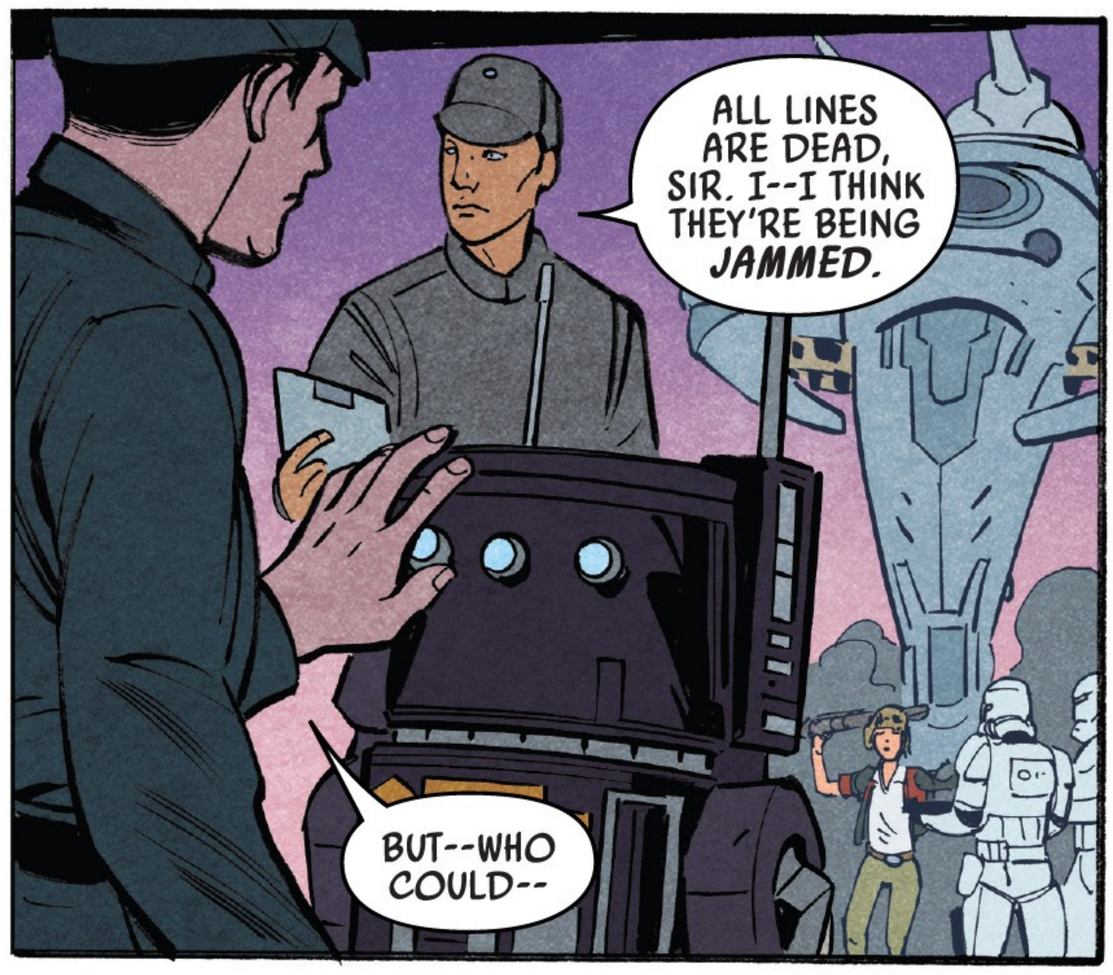
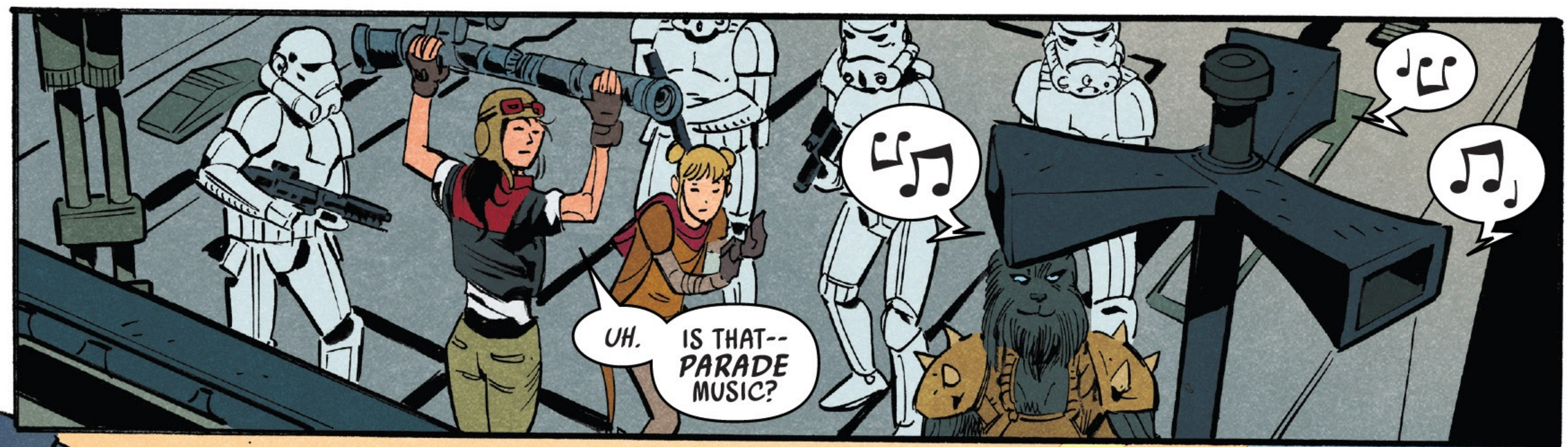
LORD.
M-M-M--
YOU WILL EXECUTE THE CRIMINAL BEFORE SHE SPEAKS. YOU WILL RETRIEVE HER CORPSE AND POSSESSIONS AND--
ZZT







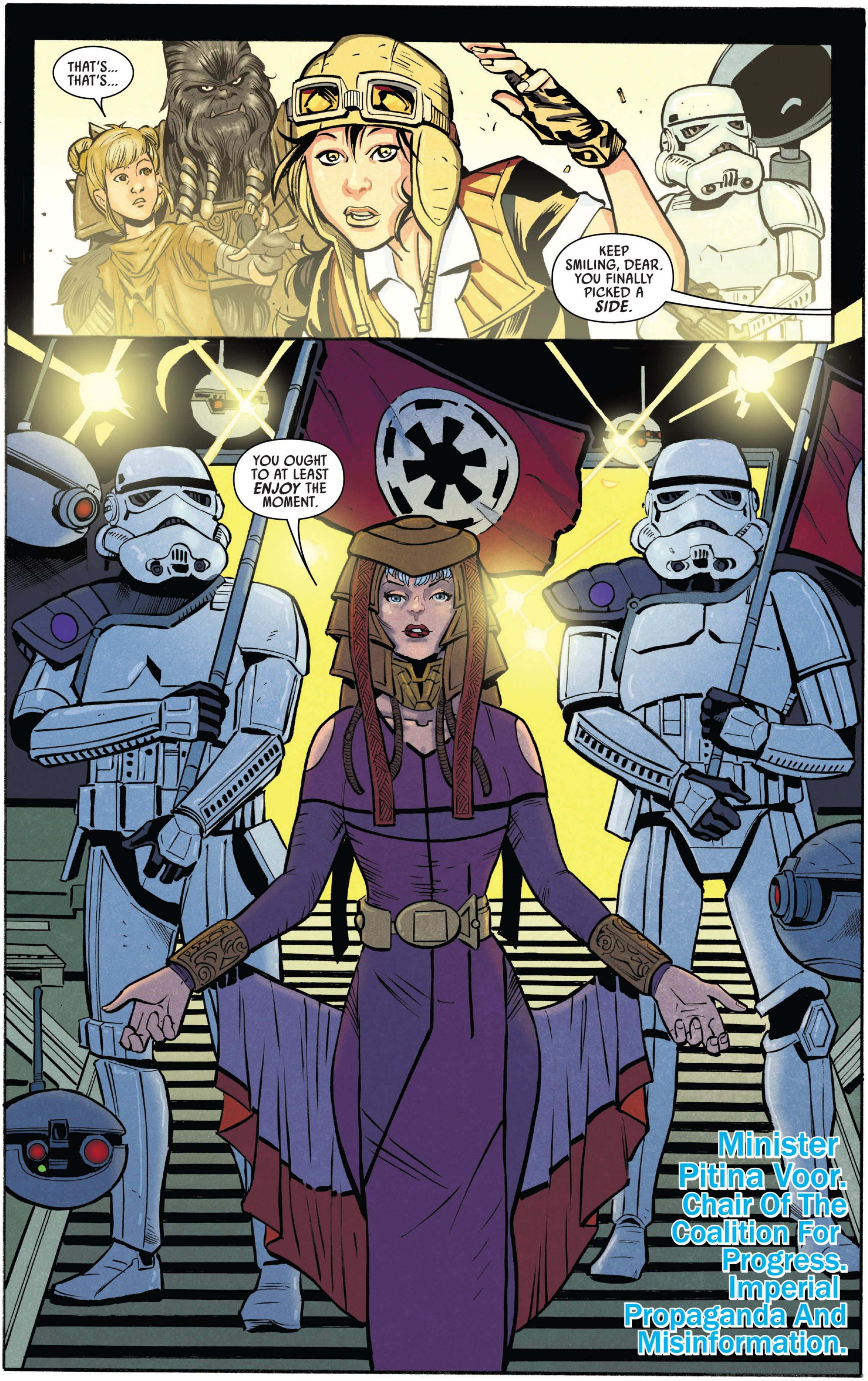
STAND DOWN, TROOPERS. STAND DOWN AND REJOICE!

UH.

OPEN WIDE YOUR ARMS AND SHARE THE WARMTH OF THE EMPEROR'S LOVE, HIS LIGHT--HIS TRIUMPH!

SSST

FOR TODAY WE WELCOME NEW HEROES TO THE FOLD!


THAT'S... THAT'S...
KEEP SMILING, DEAR. YOU FINALLY PICKED A SIDE.
YOU OUGHT TO AT LEAST ENJOY THE MOMENT.
Minister Pitina Voor. Chair Of The Coalition For Progress. Imperial Propaganda And Misinformation.

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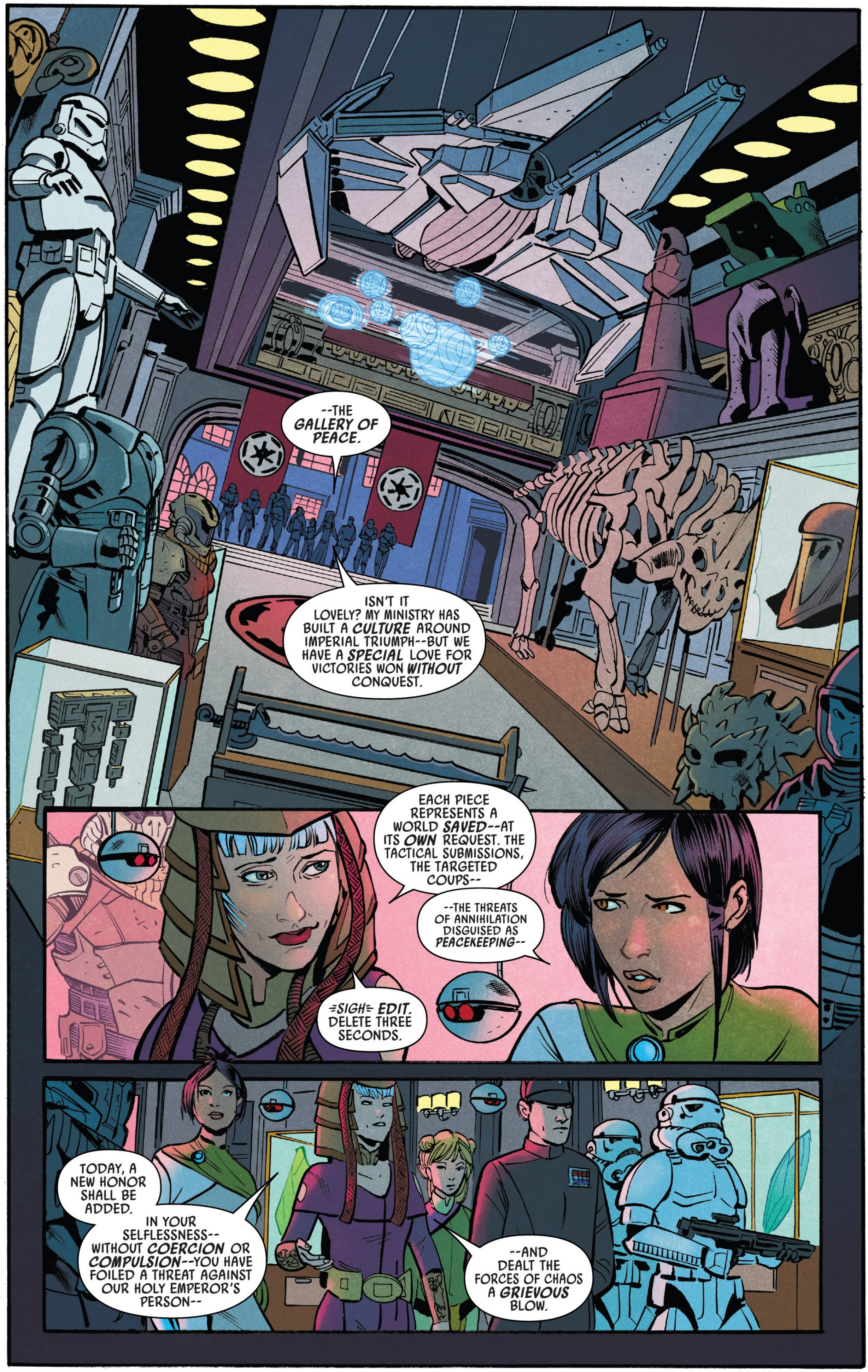
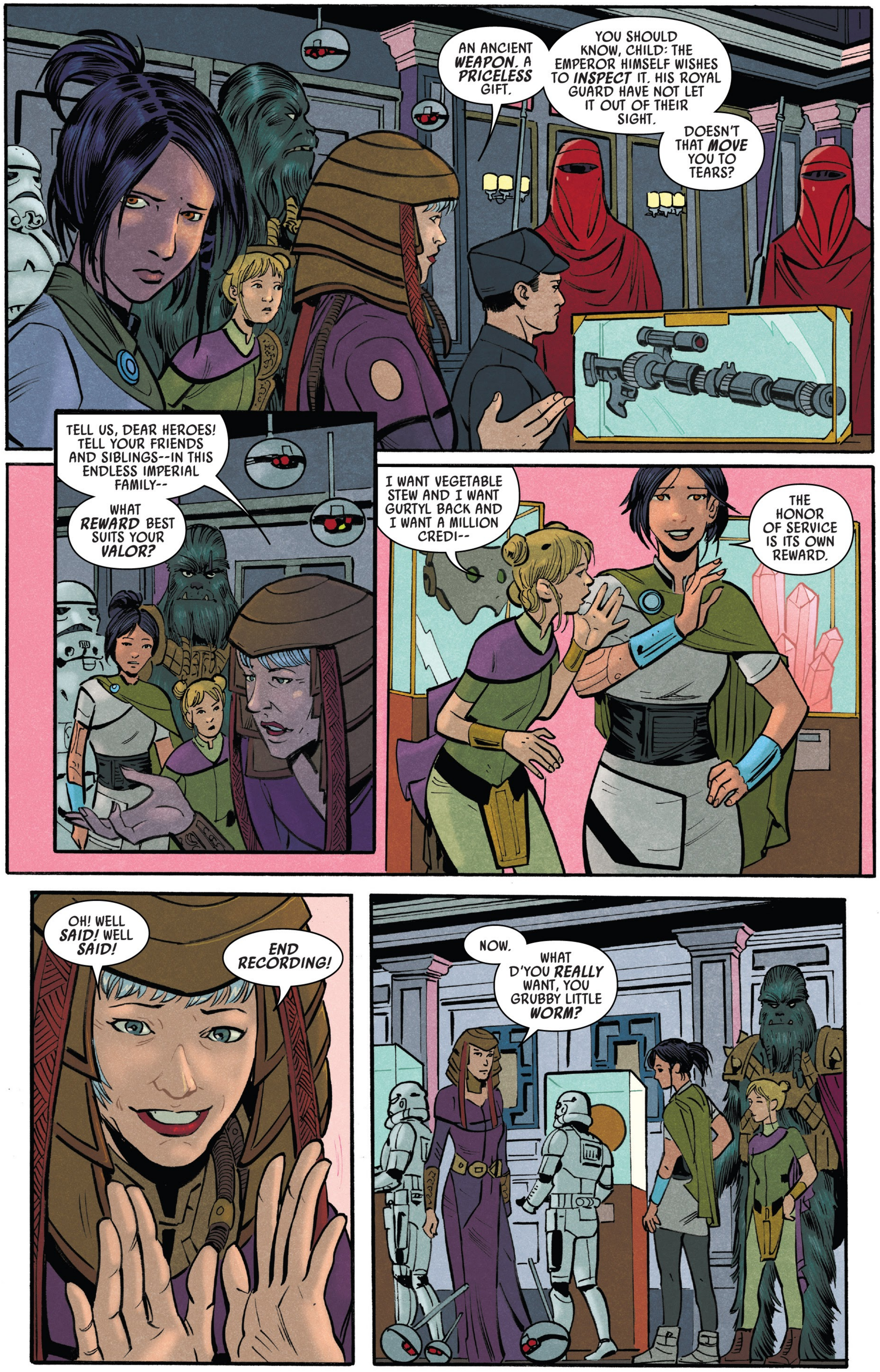
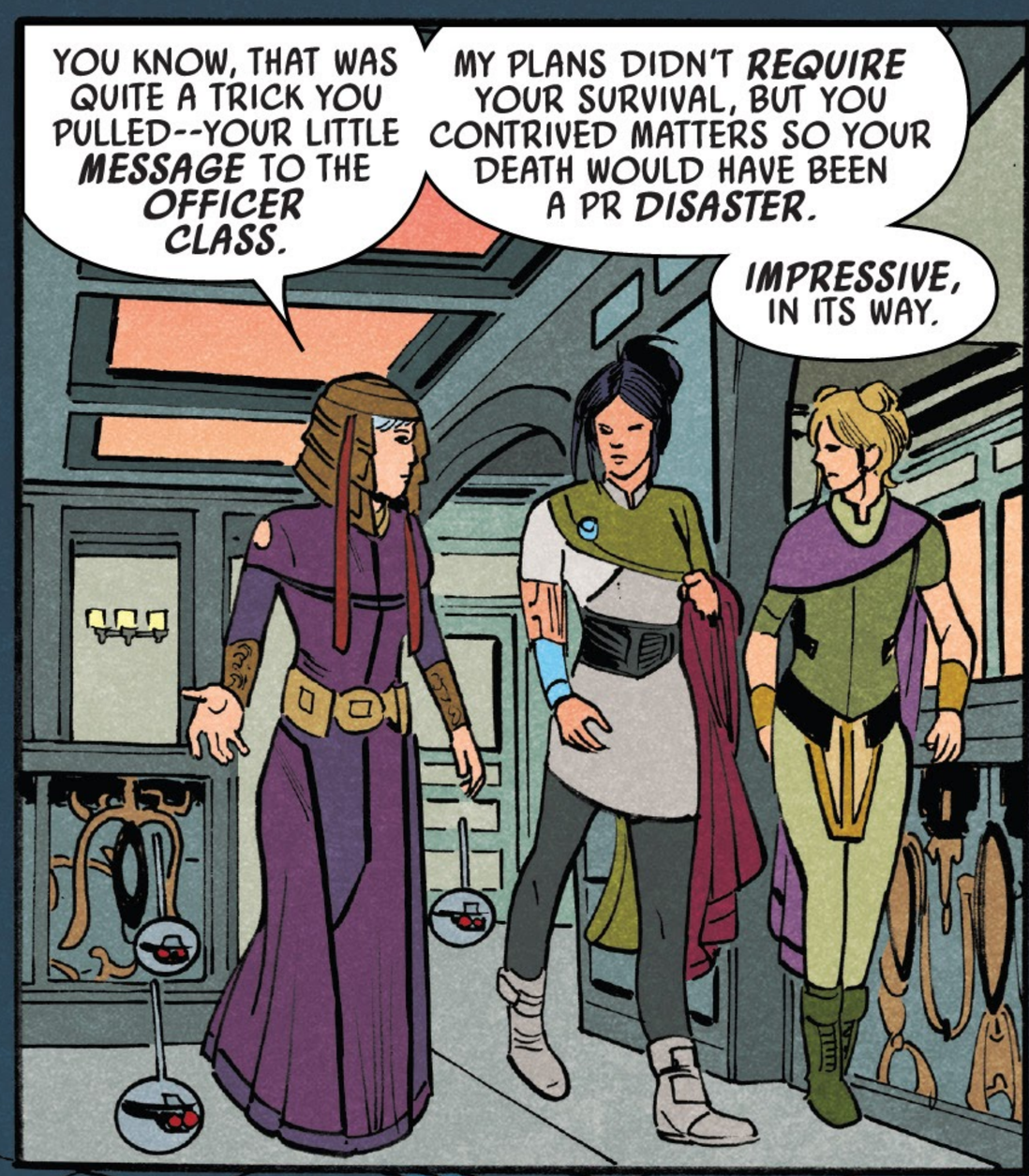

--THE GALLERY OF PEACE.
ISN'T IT LOVELY? MY MINISTRY HAS BUILT A CULTURE AROUND IMPERIAL TRIUMPH--BUT WE HAVE A SPECIAL LOVE FOR VICTORIES WON WITHOUT CONQUEST.
EACH PIECE REPRESENTS A WORLD SAVED--AT ITS OWN REQUEST. THE TACTICAL SUBMISSIONS, THE TARGETED COUPS--
--THE THREATS OF ANNIHILATION DISGUISED AS PEACEKEEPING--
=SIGH= EDIT. DELETE THREE SECONDS.
TODAY, A NEW HONOR SHALL BE ADDED.
IN YOUR SELFLESSNESS--WITHOUT COERCION OR COMPULSION--YOU HAVE FOILED A THREAT AGAINST OUR HOLY EMPEROR'S PERSON--
--AND DEALT THE FORCES OF CHAOS A GRIEVOUS BLOW.


AN ANCIENT WEAPON. A PRICELESS GIFT.
YOU SHOULD KNOW, CHILD: THE EMPEROR HIMSELF WISHES TO INSPECT IT. HIS ROYAL GUARD HAVE NOT LET IT OUT OF THEIR SIGHT.
DOESN'T THAT MOVE YOU TO TEARS?
TELL US, DEAR HEROES! TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND SIBLINGS--IN THIS ENDLESS IMPERIAL FAMILY--
WHAT REWARD BEST SUITS YOUR VALOR?
I WANT VEGETABLE STEW AND I WANT GURTYL BACK AND I WANT A MILLION CREDI--
THE HONOR OF SERVICE IS ITS OWN REWARD.
OH! WELL SAID! WELL SAID!
END RECORDING!
NOW.
WHAT D'YOU REALLY WANT, YOU GRUBBY LITTLE WORM?

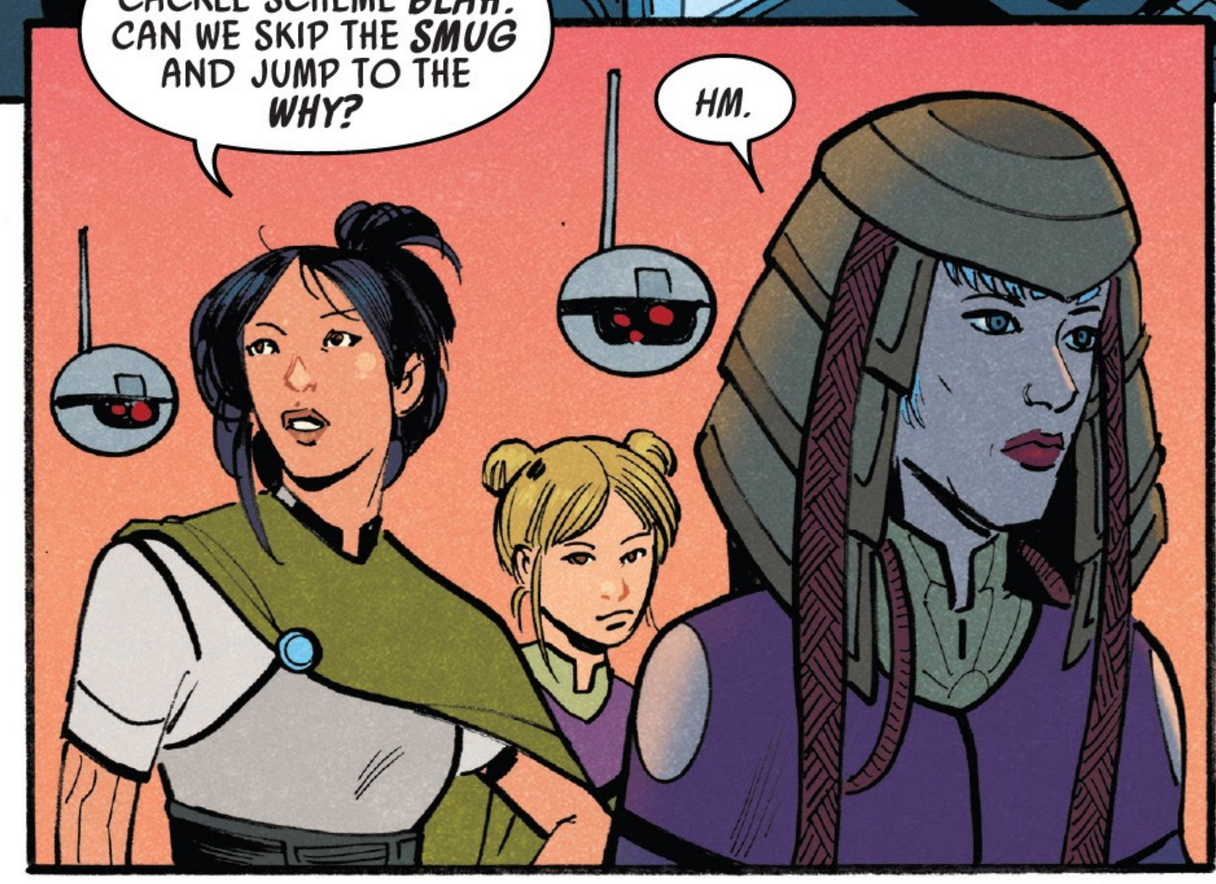
A PARDON. SAFE PASSAGE TO THE OUTER RIM.
THAT CAN BE ARR--
AND A RIDICULOUS SUM TO PAY OFF MY DEBT TO MR. KRRSANTAN. YOU STILL OWE US FOR THIS STUPID CAPE THING WE STOLE.
HUH. I THINK WE'RE A LITTLE BEYOND CONTRACTS, DON'T YOU?
HRRAAAARGH!
PAY UP OR THE RELIC GETS IT!
NOBODY EVER SEARCHES THE WOOKIEE.
TT. SUCH NEEDLESS DRAMA. PAY THE SAVAGE AND ESCORT HIM TO A SPACEPORT. AN OFFWORLD FLIGHT, PLEASE.
AND CONVEY THE RIFLE TO HIS MAJESTY.
YOU MAY DO WHATEVER YOU LIKE WITH THE CAPE. IT'S WORTHLESS.
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE I WANT.
YES, YES. ANSWERS, I EXPECT? =SIGH=
THIS WAY.

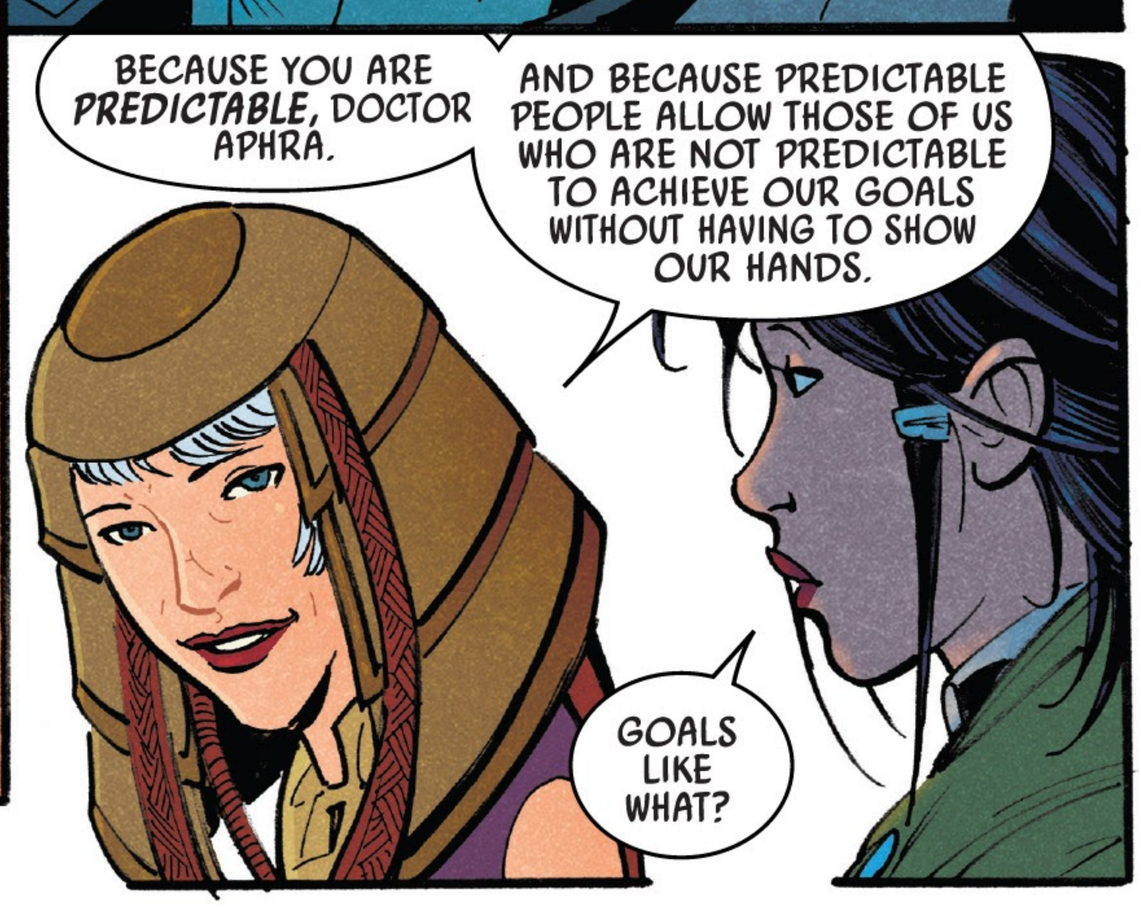


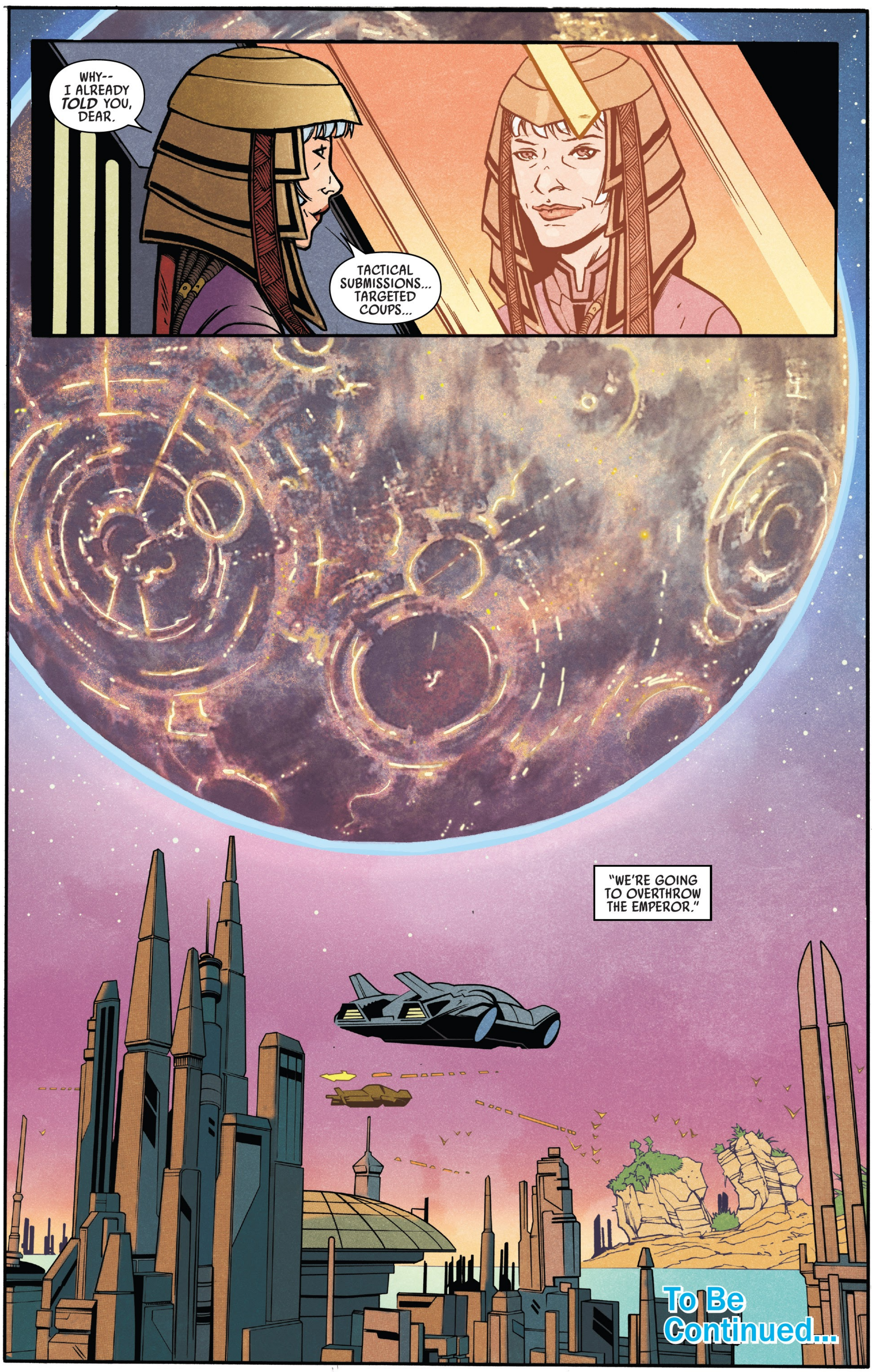
AH. THE HEART OF THE OPERATION. PROPAGANDA... MISINFORMATION... THIS IS WHERE WE SPIN LOVELY TRUTHS OUT OF LIES. ISN'T IT BEAUTIFUL?

IT WAS HERE THAT I FIRST FOUND YOU, APHRA--CAUSING TROUBLE ON MILVAYNE.

IT WAS FROM HERE THAT I TRAWLED THE GALAXY FOR RUMORS OF YOU. AND THAT I FED YOU THE FALSE MISSION TO DRAW YOU IN.






WHY-- I ALREADY TOLD YOU, DEAR.
TACTICAL SUBMISSIONS... TARGETED COUPS...
"WE'RE GOING TO OVERTHROW THE EMPEROR."
To Be Continued...

DOCTOR APHRA
NEXT ISSUE:

APHRA SAVES... THE EMPEROR?! PLUS-- THE SINISTER SECRETS OF VOOR'S RISE REVEALED!

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away is a lot easier to get to than you think! Write us at StarWars@Marvel.com to make it into a future letters page. Mark your notes "OKAY TO PRINT." If the Force is truly strong with you--tweet us! #aphracomic and #oktoprint